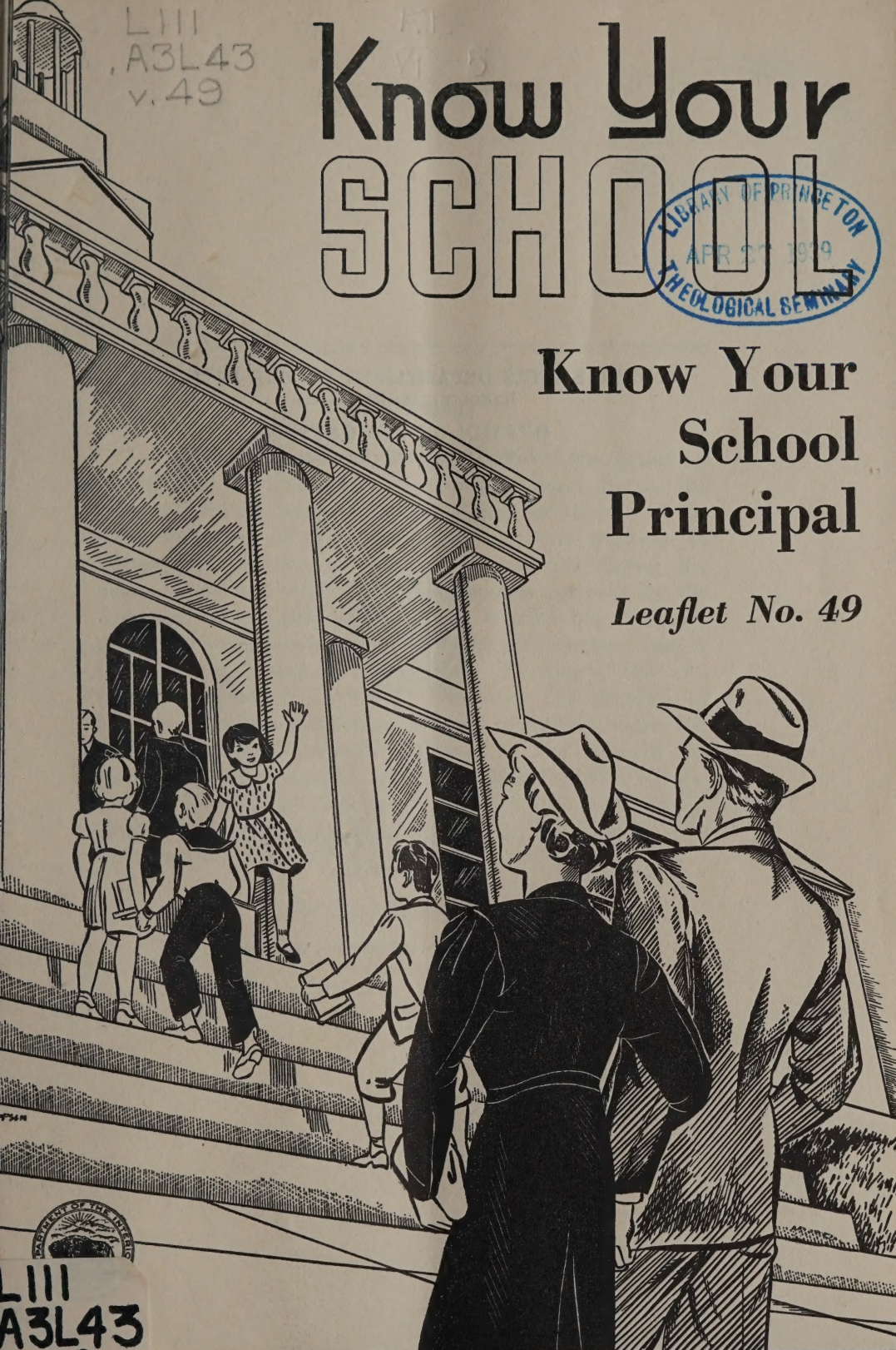
LIII
.A3L43
v.49

Know Your SCHOOL

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Know Your School Principal

Leaflet No. 49



LIII
A3L43
v.49

United States Department of the Interior • *Office of Education*

[illegible]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HAROLD L. ICKES, *Secretary*

OFFICE OF EDUCATION

J. W. STUDEBAKER, *Commissioner*

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1939

✦

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

Price 5 cents

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
APR 27 1939
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOREWORD

The Office of Education, at the request of the American Association of University Women last year, began the preparation of a series of study outlines for the use of the local branches of that organization. Four outlines in mimeographed form were issued at intervals during the year. They met with such good response not only by the American Association of University Women but by other organizations interested in studying the public-school system that the supply was soon exhausted. In view of the continuing interest, the Office of Education has decided to have the outlines printed as a series of leaflets under the general heading "Know Your School." The titles of the outlines already prepared are "Know Your Board of Education," "Know Your Superintendent," "Know Your School Principal," and "Know Your Teacher." Other outlines in the series will be issued at intervals this year.

BESS GOODYKOONTZ,
Assistant Commissioner of Education.

KNOW YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

By W. S. Deffenbaugh

Chief, Division of American School Systems

Elementary and high-school principals occupy important positions in a school system. It is to such principals that the board of education, the superintendent, and the people look for efficient administration and supervision of the individual elementary and secondary schools. The superintendent is responsible for the efficient operation of the entire system, the principal, for the efficient operation of one school. Under the direction of the superintendent the principals carry into effect in their respective schools general policies and details of administration and supervision.

The principal as the responsible head of the school has numerous duties to perform and many relationships to consider. In the following pages some of the more important duties of the principal, his qualifications, and the relationships that exist between him and other officials are briefly stated. While these statements may be used as guides, the reader will, however, recognize that they are general and that they will need modification to fit each situation. Moreover, such statements may suggest topics for further investigation and discussion by those who are studying the functions and the official relationships of the principal. A brief list of references is appended.

DUTIES

What are the Duties of Principals?

The duties of principals vary with the stage of development of the principalship in a given community. If the principalship has not evolved beyond the teaching principal stage, the administrative duties are largely of a routine or clerical nature performed at such times as the principal may not be teaching, and supervisory duties are very few. If the principalship has advanced to the administrative and supervisory stage his duties are many. As shown in the Seventh Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals 277 different

duties are prescribed for elementary school principals in the rules and regulations of the boards of education in 25 cities having a population of 100,000 or more. The 277 duties may be classified as follows: Organization and administration, 164; clerical, 70; supervisory, 36; other, 7. There was little agreement among the cities in the required duties. No one of the 277 duties was listed by all 25 cities. The greatest number of cities in agreement on any one item was 18. Many of the duties listed are trivial and vague and should not appear in a set of prescribed duties. While the principal performs many duties, they should in general be classified as administrative and as supervisory. Under the former the principal's duties relate chiefly to organization and general management, and under the latter to the supervision of instruction, including assistance to teachers in classroom management and instruction, in pupil adjustment, and in the interpretation of courses of study.

Although the duties of the principals should be in the field of administration and supervision, especially in the field of supervision, there are numerous routine clerical matters that too frequently take up a large part of the principal's time because of lack of clerical assistance. Clerical duties on the part of the principal should be reduced to a minimum by the employment of competent clerks.

In theory, the chief function of the principal is to supervise classroom instruction, but in practice according to data presented in the Seventh Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals only 33.8 percent of the elementary school principal's time is devoted to supervision, while 30.2 percent is devoted to administration, 18.3 percent to clerical work, 4.3 percent to teaching, and 13.4 percent to other duties. Probably conditions with respect to the distribution of principal's time have improved since the publication of the Yearbook in 1928 so that more time is given to supervision, but it is very doubtful whether the time given to supervision even now equals that given to administrative and clerical duties combined.

QUALIFICATIONS

What Should Be the Qualifications of School Principals?

The principal, whether elementary or high-school, should possess a broad, general education, and in addition he should be especially prepared to assume administrative and supervisory duties. Graduation from a 4-year standard college, including some courses in education topped off with at least an extra year of special professional preparation, is none too high a standard for elementary and high-school principals. The kinds of courses taken by those preparing for elementary and high-school principalships may be somewhat different but the amount of time spent in preparation should be essentially the same. A college degree, however, is not the only qualification that a principal should possess. Several years' successful teaching experience is desirable. He should also have a profound and sympathetic understanding of children, and should be able to meet the public, interpret the schools to the community, and cooperate in all community educational enterprises. In brief, he should possess the highest personal qualifications—those intangible qualifications that make for democratic leadership.

RELATIONSHIPS

What Should Be the Relationship of the Principal to the Board of Education?

Some years ago when the superintendent was not regarded as the chief executive of the board of education, when boards of education exercised administrative functions, and when school board members were elected to represent city wards, there were administrative relations between the board of education and principals. There were in some instances administrative relations between a city ward school board member and the principal of the ward school. All such direct relationship led to endless confusion.

Now that the school superintendent is the executive officer of the board and is held responsible for the efficient administration of the school system, principals

should have no direct administrative relations with the board of education nor with any of its committees. The principal's relations with the board should be through the superintendent of schools.

What Should Be the Relationship of the Principal to the Superintendent of Schools?

The superintendent of schools is responsible to the board of education for the efficient administration and supervision of the entire school system, while the principal is responsible directly to the superintendent or indirectly to him through assistant or associate superintendents for the efficient administration and supervision of one school. How successfully the policies of the board of education and the superintendent are carried out depends upon the extent to which principals and superintendent cooperate. The principals, knowing what the policies are, should be permitted to exercise considerable freedom as to the means of carrying out the policies. If a principal is not permitted to exercise initiative and leadership in his school, his work will become so perfunctory that "principal" becomes only a name. The principal should, however, confer frequently with the superintendent to discuss ways and means for the improvement of his particular school. On the other hand, the superintendent should confer with all his principals to solicit their suggestions regarding general policies. With the advice of the principals, who are closer to the classroom than is the superintendent, he should be able to make much wiser decisions regarding matters of administration and supervision than by relying entirely upon his own judgment.

What Should Be the Relationship of the Principal to Supervisors?

The problem of the proper relationship of the principal to supervisors, especially with reference to the supervision of instruction, is far from a satisfactory solution in some communities. That the superintendent should hold the principals responsible for all the activities carried on in their respective schools is a generally

accepted principle. Since the superintendent in a large school system cannot personally ascertain whether its aims and objectives are being carried out in the various schools of the city, directors and supervisors of instruction become his representatives to ascertain whether the educational policies of the superintendent are functioning and to aid the principals in discovering how instruction may be improved. The supervisors being representatives of the superintendent, he through them should exercise the responsibility given him by the board of education for the supervision of the schools by seeing that they supplement the supervisory work of the principals, which in many instances is very meager. Such supervisors, however, should not be clothed with administrative authority. It is their function to act as advisors and consultants in matters relating to the supervision of instruction. Numerous plans for the organization of supervision are in use, but no one plan or combination of plans works out successfully unless there is perfect cooperation between principal and supervisor and unless the superintendent of schools exercises general leadership in the matter of supervision. Whether or not the proper relations exist between principals and supervisors in a given school system depends upon the ability of the superintendent to deal with the personal elements connected with supervision.

What Should Be the Relationship of the Principal to the Teachers?

Needless to say, there should be cooperation between principal and teachers. The relationship should be such that teachers feel responsible for the success of the entire school and not merely for the success of their respective classes, important as the latter is in contributing to the general aims of the school. The principal in cooperation with the teachers interprets the courses of study and considers plans for the improvement of the schools. Although the principal is in a position of authority he does not direct every detail of classroom management and instruction. His function in relation to teachers is to advise them and to use every

possible means that looks toward their improvement so that few or none of the teachers fail in matters of classroom management and instruction. Just as the principal holds the teacher responsible when many pupils fail, so should the superintendent hold the principal responsible when many teachers fail, especially if the principal has a part in their selection.

What Should Be the Relation of the Principal to the School Janitor?

Since the principal is responsible for all the activities in his school it seems evident that he should have direct supervision of the janitorial service within his building. If there is a head janitor in the building the principal's relations are directly with him. Good housekeeping, proper heating, and ventilation are essential to the health of teachers, but if the principal has little or no direct supervision of janitorial service such service may be inefficient and difficult to improve.

What Should Be the Relation of the Principal to the Community?

If the people of a community are not interested in the school that their children attend and if they do not cooperate with the principal and teachers, the lack of such interest and cooperation may often be traced to the principal's office. The responsibility for educational leadership in the community rests primarily upon the principal. If he does not become such a leader some one in the community not qualified for leadership may assume it, thus leaving the principal to follow. However well qualified anyone else may be for educational leadership, it still remains the duty of the principal to interpret the work of the schools to the public and to secure its cooperation in the improvement of educational conditions not only in his particular community but also in the entire city.

What Other Relationship Has the Principal?

The principal has relations not only with the superintendent, supervisors, teachers, janitors, the home, and the community, but also directly or indirectly with the

attendance, health, guidance and counseling, research, teacher personnel, business, and school building departments, and with such other departments as may be connected with the school system.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Are special elementary school principals' certificates required in your State? Special high-school principals' certificates? What are the requirements for these types of certificates? What changes would you make in the requirements?
2. What colleges and universities in your State offer courses especially for elementary school principals? For high-school principals?
3. What types of experience would you require for elementary school principals? For high-school principals?
4. If you were superintendent of schools and were interviewing an applicant for an elementary school principalship what questions would you ask him regarding his general education? His professional preparation? What questions would you ask an applicant for the principalship of a high school?
5. Make a list of the personal traits that you think a school principal should possess and list in order of importance. If you were selecting a principal how would you determine whether the applicant possesses these traits?
6. Make a list of the qualifications that you think an elementary and a high-school principal should have and on the basis of 100 or 1,000 points indicate the maximum number of points that should be given to each item on your list of qualifications, such as general education, professional preparation, experience, and personal traits.
7. If you were preparing yourself for an elementary or a high-school principalship what academic courses do you think would be most helpful? What professional courses?
8. Are the principals of your school system provided with adequate clerical assistance?

9. Should supervisors of instruction go to a school building only when the principal calls upon them for service?
10. What part should principals have in the selection of teachers for their respective schools? In the selection of textbooks? In the preparation of courses of study?
11. What labor-saving devices should be included in the office equipment of the school principal?
12. What kinds of community leadership do you think the principal should exercise?
13. What opportunities has the community given the principal to act as leader in school community affairs?
14. What types of cooperation should the elementary or high-school principal expect of the patrons of his school?
15. Make an inventory of your community to discover what types of cooperation are being given the principal.
16. Examine the rules and regulations adopted by the board of education in your city to see what powers and duties are prescribed for school principals. Classify under the headings: Supervisory, clerical, teaching, and miscellaneous. Do the rules clearly indicate relationships?

REFERENCES

AYER, FRED C. *and* BARR, A. S. The organization of supervision New York, N. Y., D. Appleton and company, 1928.

CLEMENT, JOHN ADDISON. Cooperative supervision in grades 7 to 12. New York, N. Y., The Century company, 1930.

CUBBERLEY, ELLWOOD P. The principal and his school. New York, N. Y., Houghton Mifflin company, 1923.

DOUGLASS, HARL R. Organization and administration of secondary schools. Boston, Mass., Ginn and company, 1932.

——— *and* BOARDMAN, CHARLES W. Supervision in secondary schools. Boston, Mass., Houghton Mifflin company, 1934.

DYER, W. P. Activities of the elementary school principal for the improvement of instruction. New York, N. Y., Teachers college, Columbia university, 1927. (Contributions to education, no. 274.)

GIST, ARTHUR S. The administration of an elementary school. New York, N. Y., Charles Scribner's sons, 1928.

GIST, ARTHUR S. The administration of supervision. New York, N. Y., Charles Scribner's sons, 1934.

GOODYKOONTZ, BESS, *and* LANE, JESSIE A. The elementary school principalship. United States Department of the interior, Office of education, Bulletin, 1938, No. 8.

GRAVES, FRANK PIERREPONT. The administration of American education. New York, N. Y., The Macmillan company. Ch. xviii, 1932.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. The principal at work on his problems. Research bulletin, vol. ix, no. 2, March 1931.

——— The principal as supervisor. Research bulletin, vol. vii, no. 5, November 1929.

——— The principal studies his job. Research bulletin, vol. vi, no. 2, March 1928.

——— The superintendent surveys supervision. Eighth yearbook, Department of superintendence, 1930.

——— Department of elementary school principals. Yearbooks: numbers 1 to 16.

OTTO, HENRY J. Elementary school organization and administration. Ch. XVI. New York, N. Y., D. Appleton-Century company, 1934.

PIERCE, PAUL REVERE. The origin and development of the public-school principalship. Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago press, 1935.

REAVIS, WILLIAM C. Relations of school principals to the central administrative office in large cities. Bulletin no. 66, Department of secondary school principals of the National education association, April 1937.

——— PIERCE, PAUL R., *and* STULLKEN, EDWARD H. The elementary school, its organization and administration. Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago press, 1931.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. National survey of secondary education. Monograph no. 11. Administration and supervision. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1932. (Bulletin, 1932, no. 17, monograph no. 11.)

——— Elementary school principals, some data on their education, experience, and salaries. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1932. (Leaflet no. 43.)

——— Status of the high-school principal. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1925. (Bulletin, 1925, no. 24.)

——— Status of the junior high school principal. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1930. (Bulletin, 1930, no. 18.)

See "The Education Index" *and* "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature" for articles in journals of education relating to elementary and high-school principals.

○